



I Am From Nowhere - Docspace Electronic Press Kit

1. Short Synopsis

Since 1952 countless films, documentaries, and reports have been made about Miková, the small village in Eastern Slovakia with a population of one hundred and fifty from where Andy Warhol's family emigrated to the US. Focussing on his relatives who still live there, *I Am From Nowhere* examines the media's obsession with Miková, thus reflecting on fame, filming as well as being filmed, and on Warhol's legendary "15 minutes of fame". More than that however, it is a film about the dreams and hopes of the people there, about the universal human dream of a better life, and an "American Dream", which turns out to be completely different than expected.

2. Director's Statement

When I started with my research for *I Am From Nowhere* more than four years ago, I quickly found out that there were already several documentaries and reports on Miková and its inhabitants. Normally, this would have been reason enough to discard the project right away, but then again this very circumstance also offered itself as the film's core subject. The villagers have been interviewed and filmed so often that they now refer to themselves as "actors". To me all of them represent Warhol's best-known phrase: „In the future everybody will be famous for 15 minutes“. In the case of Miková, however, those fifteen minutes have been lasting for decades already, as film crews have been taking turns, one after the other, again and again. Ján Závacký, whose "World Tractor" made him the star of most any of these films, sums it up beautifully in *I Am From Nowhere*: "If I had known, in 1969, when I started to build this house, that so much filming would take place here, I would have made the rooms much bigger, so that all the lights and cameras and the whole crew that films fit in."

Of course it would have been easy to make a film solely about the strange and funny connection between Warhol and Miková, a film based on the humor of its sometimes rather eccentric protagonists but I wanted to take a deeper look into the microcosm of the village. As Heinrich Böll wrote: „In every village the entire world is contained, and the magic of things local mirrors the major things taking place in the whole world." I believe that because of this, the story of *I Am From Nowhere* is relevant to audiences everywhere but most of all since it is a universal story, the archetypal tale of the "rich uncle from America". For the people of Miková, Warhol has assumed almost messianic proportions in that he delivers them from provincial obscurity, spreading hope amongst them. That hope again is fertile ground for the dreams the villagers have, and thus this phenomenon became the actual central theme of the film: man's universal dream of a better life. This became most apparent in the case of Jozef Keselica, whose very own "American Dream" is just one of his many high-flying dreams. The fact that he is making his own amateur videos was one of the lucky coincidences we had, and his video diary became an important narrative element of the film. He is one of the few from the region who made his way to America, which, even after the fall of the Iron Curtain, remains out of reach for most others from Miková. This is what fascinated me in particular: Miková is present on TV-screens around the world due to the many films about it, and the West comes to Miková via satellite TV, but it is a "Global Village" connected to the world only through the media. Helena Bošnoviová, who complains in the film that all she gets to see of America are images on satellite TV, unfortunately and unexpectedly she died just two months after shooting was finished, without ever having made it to the country of her famous cousin. Meanwhile and despite everything, Jozef is already dreaming his next big dream.



Most probably we have not been the last filmcrew in Miková only for the time being. It is my heartfelt hope, however, to be spared the fate of one of my colleagues whose film was quite unfavorably received in Miková some years ago and who, on visiting the village, was threatened with being seriously beaten up....

Georg Misch, July 2000

3. Georg Misch (Director)

Georg Misch is a filmmaker concentrating on creative documentaries. At present he is developing his new feature documentary with the BBC. He lives and works in London and Vienna.

Higher Education

1995-1998 National Film and Television School, Documentary Direction, UK

1992-1995 University of Stirling, Scotland, BA Film and Media Studies

Freelance Work

Juror, Nyon International Documentary Festival, Switzerland

1998 Signed to Tomboy Films as commercials director
Featured in the Saatchi&Saatchi Showcase, Cannes

Since 1997 Freelance Documentary Director

1990-1997 Sound recordist (Docs, Fiction and Commercials)

Selected Filmography

- 2002 **I Am From Nowhere**
(80 mins, S-16/DigiBeta)
BBC, ARTE, STV
- 2000 **Style Tribes - Fashion**
(56 min, DigiBeta)
FCO, broadcast in 30 countries
- 1999 **History of Wood**
(30 sec, 35 mm)
TV commercial for ERCOL
- Lines**
(3 mins, S-16)
Channel 4, Nyon Doc Fest., British Short Film Festival,
Sheffield International Doc. Fest.
- 'ere we go**
(26 mins, S-16)
Sélection Speciale-Nyon Doc. Festival, Edinburgh Film Fest.
- 1998 **Trautonium**
(26 mins, Dolby Stereo, S-16)
- 1997 **Lifestories: Douglas Bryson**
(5 mins, DigiBeta)
Channel 4
- Insight**
(10 mins, 16mm)
Broadcast in Germany (ARD) and Australia, screened at 30



festivals including the New York Filmfestival, Cannes, São Paulo, winner 1997 Dick award, Chicago Silver Plaque, Jury Prize IFFH Munich

4. Photographs

4.1 Georg Mirsch (Director)





4.2 From 'I Am From Nowhere'





